THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) SAIL is at present examining the feasibility of setting up of a sponge iron plant based on natural gas at different locations in the country, including Daitori in Orissa.

Hike in price of rice for P.D.S.

304. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) the rate at which rice is being purchased from the farmers for the Central Pool;

(b) the rate at which rice is being given for public distribution system; and

(c) the reasons for the recent hike in the prices of rice meant for Public Distribution System?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) No rice is purchased from farmers for the Central Pool. However, paddy is being purchased, against voluntary offers by the farmers under the Government's price support scheme, at the following rates:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Variety	Rate
Common	160/
Fine	170/
Superfine	180/

(b) and (c) On account of the increase in the support price of paddy for the 1988-89 kharif marketing season, the Central issue price of rice meant for the public distribution system has been increased to Rs. 244, Rs. 304, Rs. 325 per quintal for common, fine and superfine rice, respectively.

Telecast of Special Programmes on the Death of Prem Nazir

305. SHRI THOMAS KUTHIRAVATTOM: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which Doordarshan did not telecast any special programmes on the National network after the death of Prem Nazir, the Malayalam Cine actor who holds a world record;

(b) what is Government's assessment regarding contribution of late Shri Prem Nazir to Indian cinema;

(c) the length of programme and number of special programmes on Raj Kapoor telecast after the death of late Shri Raj Kapoor;

(d) whether Government propose to telecast any special programme on Prem Nazir in the near future; and

(e) whether Government propose to telecast any film starring late Shri Prem Nazir on the national network?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) Tributes paid to Prem Nazir were included in the special report covering the 12th International Film Festival of India telecast on 16-1-1989. His death was also covered in the Doordarshan News Bulletins. Doordarshan Kendra, Trivandrum also telecast programmes of tributes to Prem Nazir.

(b) Shri Prem Nazir was a Doyen in the field of Indian Cinema. He was an artist of highest calibre who not only entertained the masses but also symbolised our commitment to secularism and social justice.